

Culture and Communication LOYC 340/2

Fall 2017

Instructor: Philip Szporer

Tuesday-Thursday 10:15-11:30 a.m. Room: CC 425

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Office Hours: by appointment, Tuesday (before and after class) or Thursday (before class)
(office location: CC 326)

Objectives

The course approaches the relationship of culture and communication by examining what it means to be an engaged citizen. Students explore cultural strategies in a global world with a view to expanding awareness of the role of imagination and creativity in expression and interpretation, and sensitivity to the role of cultural and other differences in the processes of communication. The class will center on ideas about the body in relation to variations in cultural experience and how visual and performative expression impacts questions of interpretation, aesthetics, and ethical judgment.

Course Text(s)

There is no course text. Readings are posted on the Course Reserves list; navigate to the selections listed under "LOYC 340". Over the duration of the term, selections may be added or deleted from this list.

Course Requirements

Participation is essential. Throughout the course, students will be challenged to articulate their own critical analysis and response through active discussion and written assignments, as well as a ~~group~~ oral presentation. In every class, students are expected to come prepared to discuss and respond to the readings and other material (video excerpts) presented during the lecture. Written assignments are based upon individual research work and reflection.

Details about the assignments

• **Moodle reaction entries**

Prior to every Tuesday class, students will enter one reaction (about one paragraph) on the course Moodle site, based on one of the readings for that week, unless otherwise noted.

Only ten (10) entries are required per student, each valued at 1.5 points. Goal: react critically to the readings. The substance of your entry will, more than likely, focus in on one particular issue. The process of writing in this manner helps students to process the material, and ensures preparedness for the class discussion.

• **Moodle commentaries**

There will be two short 100-word commentaries to be submitted on Sept. 21 and November 2. These two entries are worth 5% each. Specific forums will be indicated on the Moodle site for these assignments. Submit your work prior to the start of class.

• **Response essays**

Three response essays (500 words maximum) are due. Each is designed to focus attention on critical issues based on course readings and visual materials, and class discussions. These assignments provide a vehicle for clarifying your thoughts. They may be written as a series of comments, meditations or personal reflections on the readings. Typed, doubled-spaced

(reasonable font size). You may employ a bibliography or footnotes, where warranted. Due: September 26, October 10, and October 24.

• **Pecha Kucha-Style Presentation Guidelines**

Give a brief talk based on the theme of public art, and critically present the work of one artist within the constraints of the pecha kucha-styled format. Focus of the talk: The aesthetics of sustainability through the presentation of public art or land art.

*You are required to briefly meet with the instructor on October 10, 12, or 17, to identify project topics. Parameters for the projects will be discussed in class during week 1-2. A written project proposal of one paragraph will be turned on October 19.

In consultation with the instructor, prepare a **four-minute (4) presentation** on an agreed topic. Speak either from notes or from a fully articulated text but either way please bear in mind the time limit and be as succinct as possible in your handling of your material. The images advance and you talk along to the images. Each four-minute presentation will consist of no more than four (4) slides. Please bear in mind the constraints of time: you will be stopped once you reach the four-minute mark.

Note: An accompanying 500-word paper on the same artist/subject matter and focus will be handed in on the date of your presentation (either November 21 or 23.) Please adopt bibliography and footnotes, as required.

Hard copy

Checklist

- The better the presentation and discussion, the better the learning outcome for all.
- Be imaginative.
- The main points of your argument should be coherent and clearly expressed.
- Think about how you are going to divide the time allocated for your presentation.
- Evaluations will consider both the quality of content and the efficacy of the presentation.
- Presentations must be conducted in English.

Policy for Writing Evaluation: Students are evaluated on their mastery of language skills. To receive the best grade, you must

- Demonstrate maturity and originality of thought reflected by the ability to analyze, synthesize and evaluate.
- Sustain the development of a point or idea over the length of the assignment.
- Use organized paragraphs and transitional devices.
- Make conventional use of capitalization and punctuation.
- Use consistently the grammar, syntax and spelling of standard English or French, with particular attention to sentence structure and to agreement between subjects, verbs, pronouns and antecedents.

Assignments may be written in French or English. Papers must be typed, double-spaced, with a clear font size, paginated, and include your name, a title, as well as proper citations/references, bibliography, filmography/videography. Grades are based on clarity of expression, observational, descriptive and analytic skills, research methods, references, footnotes and bibliography.

All assignments must be handed in hard copy, and not sent via e-mail. E-mailed assignments will only be accepted in cases of grave illness or circumstance.

Grading Breakdown

Active participation/Attendance	10%
Moodle entries (10)	15% (10 entries @ 1.5 points each)
Commentary (2)	10% (2 assignments @ 5 points each)
Pecha Kucha presentation + essay	35% (20% presentation; 15% essay)
Response essays (3)	30% (10 points each x 3)

Attendance/Participation

Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of every class. No more than three justifiable absences will be allowed. Students will be expected to participate actively in class discussions. If you miss one class, your attendance/participation mark will automatically decrease 5%, two absences 10%. Exceptions: if you have a justified absence or a bona fide documented emergency (for example, illness, injury, hospitalization). Please advise early in the term if you are observing religious holidays. Personal travel is not an acceptable reason.

Students are expected to participate actively in critical class discussions based on readings, lectures, conceptual and image research, and screenings. Here is a rough guide that will help you understand how my assessment of your participation grade:

- If you attend class every week and say little or nothing: 0-4
- If you attend class every week and speak, but you never do more than regurgitate the course lectures, or voice your personal opinions: 5-7
- If you attend class every week and engage in discussion, listen attentively, and what you have to say is demonstrably informed by the course readings and discussions: 8-10

Lateness policy

Please note that it is exceedingly disruptive to arrive late to class, and students who do so will be marked as absent. Likewise, students who leave early without reason or who skip parts of the lecture will be marked as absent. If there are reasonable grounds to be absent for part of the class, please advise me of your situation; it is your responsibility to take the necessary measures to arrive on campus early enough. Should you end up arriving late to the lecture, or if your body demands that you leave the room temporarily, please try to be as discrete as possible in order not to disturb your fellow students. Do this by holding the door gently as it closes rather than letting it bang shut on its own.

Late work is not encouraged. If you have a valid reason for postponing assignment submissions, such as a death in the family or a serious illness, please contact me (or the Department Assistant), and we'll arrange a reasonable alternative. Otherwise, a point will be deducted for each day the paper is late (i.e., 1 point, etc...).

Plagiarism

The most common offense under the Academic Code of Conduct is plagiarism, which the Code defines as **"the presentation of the work of another person as one's own or without proper acknowledgement"** (Article 16^a).

This could be material copied word for word from books, journals, Internet sites, professor's course notes, etc. It could be material that is paraphrased but closely resembles the original source. It could be the work of a fellow student, for example, an answer on a quiz, data for a lab report, a paper or assignment completed by another student. It might be a paper purchased through one of the many available sources. Plagiarism does not refer to words alone – it can also refer to copying images, graphs, tables, and ideas. "Presentation" is not limited to written work. It also includes oral presentations, computer assignments and artistic works. If you translate the work of another person into French or English and do not cite the source, this is also plagiarism. If you cite your own work without the correct citation, this too is plagiarism.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty and to ensure you avoid committing any offenses by reading the University's Academic Code of Conduct:

<http://www.concordia.ca/students/academic-integrity/plagiarism.html>

Other Course Policies

Language: The language of instruction is English. You may submit your written work in French; however, my comments on your papers will normally be in English.

Electronic Equipment: Turn off and put away all electronic devices, i.e., mobile phones, iPods, videogames, etc. This class is **not** the place to check Facebook, surf, text-message, or engage in other distracting and disruptive behaviour with electronic devices. Save it for after class. If there is a legitimate reason you must leave your mobile phone on, please notify me in advance, put the phone on vibrate mode, and sit in the front row on the aisle so you can easily depart the class to take your urgent call. Students breaching this policy during the lecture will be penalized on their participation grades, including a possible grade of zero for participation, at the discretion of the course instructor. Please take this warning seriously.

Laptop computers are acceptable for note-taking alone, and not for any other purpose.

Food: No eating in class. Take care of hunger before the session.

Chatting in class: Please refrain from distracting chatting with your neighbours, out of respect for other students and the professor. Save conversations until the class is over.

Campus Resources

Students with Disabilities: Student with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) need to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the professor and the Access Centre for Students with Disabilities at the start of the semester. <http://www.concordia.ca/students/accessibility.html>

Student Success Centre: To improve academic skills and learning potential (including writing skills and note-taking). <http://www.concordia.ca/students/success/learning-support.html>

Weekly topics and readings (subject to change)

Week 1 – September 5, 7

Sept. 5 Introduction The course syllabus will be discussed.

Sept. 7 Creating Art and Culture

Reading:

Cynthia Freeland, "Blood and Beauty," in *But Is It Art? An Introduction to Art Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 1-29.

Note: This week, please submit this week's Moodle entry on Thursday, Sept. 7.

Week 2 - September 12, 14 The Body Politic

Readings:

Helen Thomas, "The Body in Culture: the Body Project" in *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 34-63.

Anthony Synnott, "Body," in *The Body Social: Symbolism, Self, and Society*. (London: New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 7-37.

Alan Peterson, "The Body in Question: An Introduction," in *The Body in Question: A Socio-cultural Approach* (Abingdon, Oxon: New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 1-19.

***Monday, September 18:** Academic withdrawal, with tuition refund, from fall-term courses.

Week 3 - September 19, 21 The Sensuous Body

Readings:

Adam Gopnick, "Feel Me," *The New Yorker*, May 16, 2016.

David Abram, "The Forgetting and Remembering of the Air," in *The Spell of the Sensuous: Language in a More-Than-Human World* (New York: Vintage, 1996), p. 225-260.

Note: Key excerpts from Pixar's *Inside Out* film will be screened in class this week. As your ^{first} second response essay will be related to this animated movie, you will be required to see the rest of the film on your own.

>> Assignment: Moodle commentary #1, due: September 21

Subject of the essay: Awe can take people out of their own selves and into something larger, and moving them in multi-faceted ways. Write about your own experience of awe.

>> Assignment: Response essay #1, due: September 26

Respond to Pixar's *Inside Out* and the possibility of watching emotions becoming embodied.

Week 4 – September 26, 28 The Street and Public Spaces

Sept. 28 Guest: Jen Cressey, researcher. Topic: Embodied Conversation in Public Space.

"Through physical theatre performance, what can be understood about a site's ineffable essence, its properties and values? Can we learn whether it serves its constituents, and why? Might these techniques be used by non-performer communities to explore and reveal their shared spaces, inscribing them with renewed meaning?" – Jen Cressey

>> Assignment: Response essay # 2, due: October 10

Subject of the essay: Your experience of this week's guest lecture.

Readings:

Adam Gopnik, "The Mindful Museum," *The Walrus*, June 4, 2007, 89.

Kate Thomas, "Ideas Under Glass," *Literary Review of Canada*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 25-27.

Alessandra Nicifero, "Occupy MOMA: The (Risks and) Potentials of a Musée de la danse," *Dance Research Journal*, Volume 46, Number 3, December 2014, 32-44.

Corey Schnobrich, "Public and Publics: the Occupy Movement," *On-Site Review*, 30 (Fall 2013), 13-17.

Week 5 - October 3, 5 Art As Experience

Readings:

John Dewey, "The Act of Expression," in *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigree Books, 1980), p. 58-81.

Richard Shusterman, "Beneath Interpretation," *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), p. 115-138.

Susanne Shawyer, "Occupy Newfoundland and the Dramaturgy of Endurance," *Canadian Theatre Review*, Vol. 157, Winter 2014, 7-11.

Week 6 - October 10, 12 Race and Representation

Readings:

Laina Dawes, "The True Colours of Zines," *Broken Pencil*, 2013, Issue 61, 14-17.

John Lahr, "Under the Skin," *New Yorker*, 28 June 1993 (Vol. 69 Issue 19), 90-93.

Zadie Smith, "Who Owns Black Pain?" *Harper's*, July 2017 (Vol. 335, no. 2006), 85-89.

*October 10, 12, 17: Meetings re Group Presentations (book a session with instructor during office hours prior to or immediately after class).

Week 7 - October 17, 19 Cultural Appropriation

Readings:

Joseph Boyden, "My Name is Joseph Boyden," *Maclean's* (Aug. 2, 2017)

Kathryn Prince, "Assimilating Shakespeare in the National Arts Centre's Algonquin *King Lear*," *alt.theatre*, vol. 10 no. 2, 20-23.

Jacqueline Shea Murphy, "Introduction," in *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), pp. 1-26.

David Williams, "Remembering the Others That Are Us" in *The Intercultural Performance Reader*, ed. Patrice Pavis (London, New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 67-78.

>> Assignment: Response essay #3, due October 24

What is your position re the Joseph Boyden debate?

>>October 19: Submit project proposals for the Pecha Kucha Presentation.

Week 8 - October 24, 26 Cultural Identities

Readings:

Trinh T. Minh-ha, "A Minute Too Long" in *When the Moon Waxes Red* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 107-116.

Barbara Browning, "Choreographing Postcoloniality: Reflections on the passing of Edward Saïd," *Dance Research Journal*, 35/36, (2/1), 164-169.

Julien Naggar, "Rehearsing Oppression," *alt.theatre*, Vol. 10 No. 2 (Winter 2013), 20-23.

Week 9 - October 31, November 2 Footprints 1

Readings:

Lenore Metrick, "Disjunctions in Nature and Culture: Andy Goldsworthy," *Sculpture*, Vol. 22, No. 5 (June 2003), 29-33.

Laura Kenins, "Escapists and Jet Setters: Residencies and Sustainability," *C Magazine*, 119: Autumn 2013, 8-14.

>> Assignment: Moodle commentary #2

Provide an example of a poster and its placement in an urban environment, and comment on how this space creates a place for a discussion of issues that the world now must confront. Give a link to the image or embed it into your post.

Week 10 - November 7, 9 Footprints 2

Nov. 7 Lecture

Nov. 9 Independent study day: preparation for your Pecha Kucha-styled presentation.

Week 11 - November 14, 16 Gender Identities

Readings:

Ann Cooper Albright, "Techno Bodies: Muscling with Gender in Contemporary Dance" in *Choreographing Difference: The Body and Identity in Contemporary Dance* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1997), pp. 28-55.

Robin Marantz Henig, "Rethinking Gender," *National Geographic*, Vol. 231 No. 1 (January 2017), 48-73

"The Body You Want: Liz Kotz interviews Judith Butler," *Artforum*, Vol. 31 No. 3 (November 1992), 82-89.

Diane Torr and Stephen Bottoms, "Drag and Self" in *Sex, Drag and Male Roles* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), pp. 195-221.

Week 12 - November 21, 23 In-class Presentations

>> Assignment: Pecha Kucha-styled presentations + essays

Accompanying essays are due on the day of your presentation.

Week 13 - November 28, 30 Digital Futures

Reading:

Sohail Inayatullah, "Eliminating Future Shock," *Futurist.com*, Sept. 12, 2006.